ABSTRACT

A transfer apparatus includes a shuttle depending from an overhead support with a pair of arms for receiving and shifting a specimen carrier from one conveyor to a second conveyor of a dual-conveyor track. The shuttle is operable to retain a specimen carrier along either the first or second conveyor and to release a specimen carrier along either the first or second conveyor. Sensors are located to detect the presence of a specimen carrier at each of the retention locations, and to confirm the release of a specimen carrier from the shuttle along each of the conveyors. A drive motor for moving the shuttle between the retention and release positions is electrically connected to a command module with a processor, for receiving instructions as to the position of the shuttle. The sensors are also connected to the processor to transmit detection data to the processor. A queue is positioned upstream of the shuttle and is electrically connected to the processor. The queue includes retractable shafts, sensors and scanners for selectively retaining, detecting and scanning identification data from a specimen carrier on either conveyor upstream of the shuttle, and transmitting the information to the processor.